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THE FIRST MORAVIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

*A Paper read before the Moravian Historical Society,
September 5, 1895.*

BY J. M. LEVERING.

SOME interesting and important events of the first period of Moravian Church work in America from 1734 when the first Moravian evangelist in Pennsylvania, George Böhmsch, arrived at Philadelphia to 1749 when the Church acquired, through an act of Parliament, a recognized status in British dominions and assumed a distinct denominational position, have been specially commemorated by sesqui-centennial celebrations. Others which deserved this kind of attention have passed unnoticed. One of these is the founding of the first missionary society of the Moravian Church in America, August 19, 1745. It was called "*The Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel*" and was fully organized November 28, o. s. 1745. This event is noteworthy not only in the annals of Moravian missions but also in the larger history of religious activity in the American colonies, because no earlier record has been produced of any such missionary society formed elsewhere in the new world, other missionary efforts in the colonies prior to this time having been undertaken only by societies in Europe or by single individuals or congregations as such.

It is surprising that the history of Moravian missions records so little about this Pennsylvania Society of 1745.

No allusion to its existence is to be found in the works of German and English writers on the missions of the

Church in America, and the most that is recorded about it by American writers is contained in two brief passages. Bishop Levin Theodore Reichel in his manuscript entitled "The early History of the Church of the United Brethren, commonly called Moravians, in North America, A. D. 1734-1748," compiled prior to 1857 and printed by the Historical Society in 1888, in an enumeration of the sources of revenue to meet the various expenses of the time, has on page 170 the following: "A third source of income was the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, founded by Bishop Spangenberg and consisting mostly of friends of the Brethren. From August 13, 1745, to December 31, 1747, this Society collected for missionary purposes £454, 13. 5., a not inconsiderable sum for those times." On page 160 he refers to this Society as having been organized at Lancaster and having lasted about ten years.

The late Bishop Edmund de Schweinitz introduces his "Historical Sketch of the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, 1787 to 1887," with these words: "The Society of the United Brethren for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen which celebrates the centennial anniversary to-day [November 1, 1887] is not the first of its kind organized by the Moravian Church in America. There existed one of a much earlier date, founded by Bishop Spangenberg in August of 1745. It originally numbered thirty members; many more were added in the course of time, representing all or nearly all the American churches of the Brethren. The receipts of the first year amounted to £173, 18, Penn.; the expenditures to £181, 0. 2., Penn. This association, however, which bore the title of 'The Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel,' supported not only the Foreign Missions of the Church, but also the very extensive Home Missionary work which our fathers carried

on in nine of the original thirteen colonies. How long the Society existed does not appear. The last minute in its Minute and Day-Book is dated April 30, 1759. In all probability it came to an end after the abrogation [May 30, 1762] of the so-called 'Economy' [*i. e.* cooperative association] at Bethlehem and Nazareth and the final departure [June 22, 1762] of Bishop Spangenberg to Europe."

The *Moravian* of September 28, 1887, contains an article of somewhat more than two columns by John W. Jordan, entitled "The First Missionary Society in America," which gives a number of items from the records of the Society of which this paper treats, together with some receipts and disbursements for the "The Furtherance of the Gospel" prior to its organization. Reference to these latter operations which run back to April of 1743 will be made again.

The original sources from which the material of this paper is drawn are :

The Minute and Day-Book of the Society to April 30, 1759.

The Ledger of the Society to May 19, 1760, the pages of which after this date are torn out.

The Letter-Book of the Society, 1746 to 1751.

The Ledger of the General Diaconate at Bethlehem, June 1, 1762, to May 31, 1771.

The manuscript journals of Synods from 1745 to 1765.

Sundry circular letters calling for the stated collections of the Society between the years 1762 and 1771.

Letters of Spangenberg to Brethren in Pennsylvania in reference to the organization of the Society.

Letters from the Unity's Directory in Europe, 1766 to 1768.

Official minutes of Conferences and the Bethlehem Diary between 1744 and 1771.

Various lists of members, miscellaneous memoranda and sundry letters in reference to the work of the Society.

Some of this matter has been collected since 1887 from packages of manuscript in the Archives at Bethlehem which had not been examined for many years and probably had not come to the notice of the writers quoted above.¹

In order to render the process by which the Society came into existence clear some previous history must be reviewed.

Count Zinzendorf, prior to his banishment from Saxony in 1736, defrayed the expenses of the rapidly growing mission work of the Church for the most part out of his own private resources. In the Spring of that year he visited Holland where Spangenberg in 1734 had opened negotiations with the Dutch Surinam Company for the beginning of a mission in Surinam. The Count in pursuance of this object gathered a nucleus of friends in Amsterdam composed of clergymen, schoolmen, magistrates and titled persons, among the latter the Princess of Orange, who combined to furnish pecuniary support.

This was the beginning of the first missionary society in aid of the work of the Moravian Church and the beginning of systematic efforts to raise revenue for this cause with the American undertakings mainly in view.

That association was more definitely organized in 1739

¹ The records of the Society and, when not otherwise indicated, letters of Spangenberg and others quoted, are originally in English. The words enclosed in brackets in quoted passages are inserted by the author of this paper. Extracts from the Bethlehem diary and records of from Synods are translated from the German.

In dates the new style reckoning is followed whenever the contrary is not indicated.

When the old style date or a double date is given this is because the occasion or event has been so commonly associated with the o. s. date that this has become too familiar to be set aside.

but was disbanded in 1750. The important Zeist Missionary Society organized in 1793 is its successor.

The institution of further organized effort to raise revenue was discussed at the third General Synod which met at Gotha in June 1740 and considered the plan of operations in Pennsylvania presented by Spangenberg who had been in America from 1735 to 1739, and was present at that convocation. In the Spring of 1741 he went to England and on April 27 at a lovefeast in the Fetter Lane Chapel in London organized the English Moravian "Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel," choosing as its watchword verses 5-8 from the Third Epistle of St. John: "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren and to strangers; which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for His name's sake they went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth."

Memoranda in the handwriting of Spangenberg state that the Society was founded in accordance with instructions received by him at the Synod of Gotha, and refer to plans for organizing a similar association in Pennsylvania.

This English society disbanded in 1750, was resuscitated in 1766 and fully reorganized in 1768, and is yet in existence. Not only was it the model of the first American Society but its earliest efforts were directed towards this country, its first beneficiaries having been the three missionaries, Gottlob Büttner, John William Zander and John Christopher Pyrlaeus, who arrived at the infant settlement in the Forks of the Delaware on October 26, 1741. The following year, under Spangenberg's direction, it entertained in London and helped to fit out the large company called the "First Sea Congregation"

which came to Pennsylvania in June 1742. While the ship *Catherine* with this colony on board was lying off Gravesend Spangenberg, being yet with them, wrote the following letter to his friend Henry Antes of Fredericktown :

“Thy love requires some employ, and thy gifts need not spoil for want of exercise—well I will propose something to you.

Could not you with some brethren and friends begin a Society for the furtherance of the Gospel in America?

People have taken away or at least diminished the lands, possessions, bread, also liberty and lives of the poor Indians as well as of the Negroes, but hitherto have done little towards the saving of their souls.

Now the Saviour stirs up certain of His children on whose hearts it is laid to seek the salvation of these poor heathen and to preach the crucified Jesus to them.

Their labour hitherto altho’ it appeared but small, was nevertheless not without a blessing ; and we hope that now, since a beginning is made, it will go further with it.

Our care should be that, when we ourselves can do nothing to the helping of the poor souls, that we might lend a hand to those who have a desire and inclination to it.

And here prayer is the chief point : yet, while we are still in the body, many times outward things are requisite, especially when one journeys over sea, or lives in such circumstances that he cannot maintain himself by his labour.

Here St. John says we should help such forward who go out for the Gospel’s sake and take nothing of the heathen, that so we may be fellow-helpers to the Truth.

With this mind we have about a year ago begun a Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel here in London.

In Amsterdam there is likewise such a Society of which Isaac Le Long is Secretary, which has already been of great use to us.

The first occasion to these societies was no other than the many Brethren and Sisters going among the poor heathen. The beginning to that of Amsterdam our Dr. Br. Thürnstein [*i.e.*, Zinzendorf, Lord of Thürnstein being one of his hereditary titles] made and the Brethren there continued it.

The Society in London was begun at a love-feast of Brethren of whom we believe their desire is that the Saviour might have the souls whom He has purchased with His blood. These chose certain Commissaries to compose the Ground-Rules of the Society and then to communicate them to the whole body.

This was done and we agreed all to the proposed points, of which I will mention but a few, for I would willingly be brief.

1. No one shall be chosen a member as long as any one member has any just objection against it.
2. There shall be a Committee who shall meet weekly to confer together and consult what is to be done to the furtherance of the Gospel.
3. The Committee has a Secretary who is to have the keeping of the accounts and other matters of the Society, and a servant to the assisting of the Pilgrims.
4. The whole Society meets every four weeks when the accounts of the progress of the Gospel are communicated to them.
5. No one subscribes, but at the meeting of the congregation a box is set where the poor may put in his half-penny and the rich his guinea; this is not applauded for it, the other not disrespected; it depends on the Saviour's hand as He inclines the heart.
6. There are Corresponding Members, viz.: Dr.

Doddridge and Mr. Ingham, to whom we send accounts and they contribute according to their good pleasure.

7. The money that is gathered is disposed of by the Committee according as the circumstances from time to time require, and the accounts lie on the table at every meeting of the Society, where any one may see them that will.

8. The particulars or heads of matters agreed on in the Conference from time to time by the Committee are wrote in a book and laid on the table at every meeting of the Society that anyone may look therein.

9. The money sent or delivered to the Committee, or any other member must be given the Treasurer in three days time to prevent irregularities.

10. The Society must not interfere with other acts of charity ; for one should not in opening one door of doing good shut another.

11. The Committee shall not borrow any money without it be with the consent of the whole Society.

12. Whosoever gives others offence by his behaviour and will not be reprov'd shall be excluded from the Society 'till he reforms in truth.

13. A Brother out of the Moravian Congregation who is well acquainted with the English affairs, and who the congregation approves as their correspondent is to join the Committee and communicate to them the account of things.

14. The correspondence with the Brethren among the Heathen and other messengers of the Saviour is to be carried on by this Society.

15. Likewise the traveling expenses of those that go to Jews, Christians and Heathen, our Saviour's approbation and the congregation's being first given, when such help is found necessary, [are paid].

16. The Rules of the Society can only by the Society itself be altered when they find it profitable or necessary.

We have thought sometimes some good might be brought about by printing or buying good books and distributing of them among the people, for instance : we proposed to print a Spanish Testament, and distribute among the Spaniards and Portugese in West India, who are used to trade with the English.

We have had hitherto the greatest blessing in this our Society ; our hearts have often been inflamed with praise to the Saviour when we have read something of, or talked or thought on the work of the Lord and the Brn. and Srs. whom we have assisted, thanked the Saviour, and we have been rejoiced by their grace.

My Dear Brother, when our Saviour puts it in your heart, then deliberate upon it with some Brethren who are childlike in the Saviour's matters, if you can't have a Society of this kind in Philadelphia. For certain from Philadelphia you could send out messengers to all places where the Saviour is not yet known with less trouble, loss of time and expence than from anywhere else.

I will assure you hereby that I love you heartily and tenderly as your eternally in love bounden brother, and servant.

SPANGENBERG.

Gravesend the 4th of March, 1742, on Board the *Catherine Snow*.

This letter was followed by another dated London, June 18, 1742 containing a passage which is interesting not only because of the touching tribute Spangenberg pays to the self-forgetting, even reckless generosity of Count Zinzendorf, but also because it reveals the prudent foresight of the writer who knew that in the further progress of the mission-work, organized and syste-

matic efforts to secure pecuniary support from members and friends of the Church would be indispensable, both as a matter of necessity and as a sound principle, having the development of liberality among the people in mind.

In this second letter he says :

“I wrote you by Br. Boehler about a Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel in Philadelphia. I hope you have received my letter. Put me not to shame in my confidence and lay not the matter quite aside, for we live in a time when the face of the whole earth is in a stir. Light and darkness strive together and the Saviour will make the whole earth full of his knowledge. Yet I wish heartily that you may act no otherwise than the Saviour’s plan is and the Spirit of Jesus Christ teaches His Church.

I would willingly know how the dear Count Zinzendorf who I hear is called by you Thürnstein,² the dear Brother, comes to rights in his outward affairs.

He has done no otherwise his life long than distribute his money among the people, I speak of outward affairs, and therein he has an extraordinary good hand that I should rejoice if he had an £100,000 to give out. It is the joy of his heart when he can do good to any poor, any miserable, any confused man, or any other creature; and when he can’t help all the poor miserable people and other creatures, it causes him pain in his heart. He willingly forgets himself thereby and that is the reason why he most commonly suffers hardships in his travels and is oftentimes in great want and scarcity; for when

² The Count was at this time in Pennsylvania where he had taken the name Thürnstein before the public and in communications with local authorities to shield his ancestral name from the calumnies which his enemies were heaping upon his person and work. It was done out of consideration for relatives in Europe and etiquette towards the Saxon court, just as on a former occasion he had assumed the name of Freydeck, another of his numerous hereditary titles.

he has anything for his own use he has neither heart nor mind to keep it for himself, but parts with it as soon as he finds a necessitous object. After this manner he has done hitherto with all his revenues and with all his substance. He willingly and with joy saw it spent in the service of the Saviour and His Church, to the propagation of the gospel, to the maintaining and educating of poor children, to the entertaining of strangers and guests and such like things.

He did not mind it tho' many thousands of his were spent. Only this he required that it might be for the Saviour's sake, and the salvation of poor souls. A more generous mind and kingly heart I have never seen in my life than I in truth have found in him, our Brother of Thürnstein.

Therefore he is not the person which one should leave to bear the burthen alone, but whoever can lend him a helping hand in the work which he does for the Saviour's sake, should do it with a willing heart. Is one not to let his enemy's ox or his ass lie when it is fallen under its burthen when one only acts according to the Jewish law, how then should one leave a servant of the Saviour who burns with love to Christ and zeal for His house alone to sink under his burthen if one had but half a shoulder to help to bear."

Again in September, 1743, when Spangenberg was having his parting consultation with the second large Pennsylvania colony called the "Second Sea Congregation" on board the ship at Cowes he wrote a third letter on the subject addressed to Nicholas Garrison, Thomas Noble, Jaques Cortelyou, John Stephen Benezet, Edward Evans, Henry Antes, Charles Brockden, George Merkel, William Frey and Christopher Wiegner, all men with whom he had become intimately acquainted during his first sojourn in America. The closing part of this letter

reads as follows: "Since the work is great and requires often to be helped, I beg of you to consider whether it would not be good to have a society in New York or Philadelphia for the furtherance of the gospel amongst the Heathen and Negroes, merely designed to that end which John mentioneth in his third epistle. I know your prudence as well as your willingness, and therefore will leave everything to your further consideration; though I have written more fully about this matter to Brother Henry Antes. Let my heart rejoice over you and your effectual love."

The letter is dated "on board the ship *Irene*,³ Sept. the 27th 1743, st. N."

His previous letters had borne fruit however before this time, for Henry Antes was not the man to neglect such appeals.

He laid the matter before some of the friends of the Moravian Church in Philadelphia and New York and Mr. Benezet in the former and Mr. Noble in the latter city, both of whom had served as agents of the Brethren at their respective ports, purchasing and shipping supplies, forwarding correspondence, etc., agreed to act as treasurers of any funds that might be contributed.

When the Pennsylvania Synod of various denominations met in January, 1742, at the call of Antes, responsibility for the conduct and support of the mission work which had been instituted by the Brethren in North and South America and the West Indies was soon accepted as one of its incumbencies. On this interdenominational, union basis, as a "Church of God in the spirit," those who were interested in the work were asked to rally to its support, as being not a denominational propaganda,

³ The name *Irene* was at first applied to this vessel, the *little strength*, occasionally and was then given to the third such transport of the Church, built at Staten Island and launched in 1748.

but simply an effort to save souls, in which the co-operation of "all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ" was sought. No general society for the prosecution of the work other than the Pennsylvania Synod was organized at this time, but a little nucleus of contributors was gathered, not only in the two cities, but also at several points in the country at which members of that Evangelical Alliance lived. A sheet of so-called "Heathen accounts" with Thomas Noble of New York, running from August 14 to December 31, 1742, and similar statements of receipts and disbursements by Benezet in Philadelphia, running from April 4, 1743, to December 31, 1744, exist among the papers collected on this subject. Mr. Benezet's statement is headed: "Account of the money paid and received for the Furtherance of the Gospel." These are the statements published by Mr. Jordan in "The Moravian" September 28, 1887, already referred to.

In 1744 Spangenberg, having been consecrated a Bishop, returned to America to assume full charge of the work of the Moravian Church in this country. He landed at New York on October 25. He came as a kind of minister plenipotentiary of the Church, with authority to personally appoint a successor if necessary.

He bore the formidable title of "Vicarius Generalis Episcoporum et per Americam in Presbyterio Vicarius." It meant that he was the representative of the ancient Moravian Episcopate and of the General Eldership in America.

His return opened a new epoch of more complete organization, systematic plans and energetic activity in all departments of work. After visiting the Indian mission at Shecomeco, November 6-18, to investigate the distress inflicted by the hostile prejudice of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of New York, he reached Bethlehem November 30 and set to work vigorously.

He instituted a Mission Conference with a Central Executive Board, reorganized the school founded at Bethlehem February 6, 1744, for the instruction of candidates for missionary service in the Indian languages, John Christopher Pylaeus, at that time the foremost Indian linguist among the Brethren, being the teacher and the illustrious Zeisberger one of the first students, and began again to agitate the formation of a general Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel. The tribulations of the Shecomeco Indians were now the main incentive to action.

An appeal in their behalf to the English congregation of Philadelphiā in the handwriting of Henry Antes and signed by him and the missionary Christian Henry Rauch is yet in existence.

A Synod was held in March, 1745, at Fredericktown, and although the organization had in view was yet deferred, the number of contributors was increased. On account of the persecution in New York and the Indian war in New England, it was decided "to wait a little while in the work of evangelizing the heathen [Indians] until the storm was spent."

Meanwhile Bishop Spangenberg made his famous journey to Onondaga, May 24—July 13, 1745, accompanied by Conrad Weiser, David Zeisberger and John Joseph Bull named Shebosh by the Indians, and held a treaty with the Iroquois Confederacy with a view to sending missionaries among their people. When they returned to Bethlehem and reported on their mission, new zeal for the cause was awakened.

August 18–19, 1745 another Synod was held at Bethlehem, yet nominally a union Synod but in fact a Synod of the Moravian Church and its adherents, as eventually in 1748 these convocations became nominally and avowedly. A hundred and fourteen persons were in attendance.

The Journal of this Synod calls it "The Pennsylvania General Synod held on the basis of John 17, at Bethlehem in the Forks of the Delaware, August $\frac{7}{18}$ — $\frac{8}{19}$ 1745." The Bethlehem diary of August 19 contains the following record: "In the third session we sang the Litany in double choir. At the words, 'Send faithful laborers into Thy harvest,' we extended the right hand to those who have been received as new laborers. [34 persons who had been employed on probation.] At the words, 'bless and sanctify the married state,' the marriage of Joseph Müller to Catherine Koch, and of James Burnside to Mary Wendover was performed. All the proceedings of the day were attended by an overpowering grace. *Especially was this the case with the beginning of the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel.* Brother Joseph⁴ spoke of the need and blessing of such a Society and proposed to be the first member.

Henry Antes immediately gave him his right hand as the second member. William Frey arose and offered himself as the third. John Bechtel did the same, likewise Abraham Müller and Michael Schaefer."

It is further stated that Brother Johannes extended greetings from the Indian congregation and that some of the Indians present sang hymns in their own language during which such a deep feeling pervaded the Synod that many tears were shed, and that at the close of the day the young men of Bethlehem went about the village rendering vocal and instrumental music.

The Brother Johannes referred to was the celebrated

⁴ This name first applied to Spangenberg by Count Zinzendorf became his most common designation among his brethren, being even adopted by him—a kind of metonymy, substituting Joseph for Augustus, the root-words from which the two names are derived in their respective languages being of kindred meaning. The sacred Bible name thus taken instead of the heathen name was then used to suggest Spangenberg's fatherly care of the large number of souls dependent upon his wise thrift and management, like the beneficent provisions made by Joseph, the bread-father in Egypt.

Mohican Indian who has been the subject of so much narrative, romance and fiction. *Wassamapa*, baptized April 16, 1742, as the fourth convert, by Christian Henry Rauch, and named *John*. He had formerly been called *Job* by the Dutch traders of New York, and is now generally known as *Tschoop*, a phonetic spelling of Job as pronounced by the German tongue untrained to English, found thus spelled in manuscript reports and taken for an Indian name by Loskiel who put it into print in his "History of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Indians in North America," published in German in 1788 and in English in 1794. This perpetrated misnomer is inscribed on the stone which marks the grave of John Wassamapa in the old Moravian Cemetery at Bethlehem.

The official journal of that Synod contains the following record: "In the fifth session the proposition to form a Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel again came up. The benefit and blessing of it was shown from the example of other Societies, [viz. those in England and Holland.] We adopted the words of the Third Epistle of John as the basis of it. Brother Joseph did not wish to urge anyone to this step, but all who felt an inclination thereto should communicate with him orally or in writing. He proposed to be the first member of such a Society. Br. Henry Antes was the second who offered himself. William Frey followed him in a very open-hearted manner. The fourth was John Bechtel. Michael Schaefer declared that he would be at the service of the cause with his farm. Abraham Müller also pledged us his right hand to the undertaking. Jacob Vetter and [Abraham] Boemper also offered themselves after the session as members of the Society."

Finally the formulated Digest or "Results" ("Conclusa") of the Synod have this: "Such persons who

feel prompted to become members of the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel will offer themselves and will institute such regulations that all things may be done orderly not only before God but also in the sight of men."

These records of the Synod are certified to by George Neisser, Secretary, and

William Lewis Becker, Philadelphia

Eberhard Rhiem, Muddy Creek

Frederick Boeckel, Heidelberg

Michael Rank, Erlingtown

Peter Kohl, Warwick

Henry Seib, Donegal

Peter Ganter, Lancaster

John Leinbach Sr., Oley

John Bechtel, Germantown

Michael Schaefer, Tulpehocken

William Frey, Fredericktown

Sebastian Knauss, Maguntsche

Herman Fischer, Goshehoppen

Abraham Müller, Bethlehem

Sebastian Studi, White Oak Land

The original membership of the Society numbered thirty⁵, the last name in the oldest extant list being that

⁵ The following is the complete original list as given by George Neisser:

Joseph Spangenberg	Abraham Rhiem
Henry Antes	Peter Günther
John Bechtel	Nicholas Kiesel
William Frey	Jacob Frank
Abraham Müller.	Adolph Meyer
Michael Schaefer	Peter Etter
Jacob Vetter	George Frederick
Abraham Boemper	William Becker
Eberhard Rhiem	David Müller
Peter Kohl	Jasper Payne
Paul Diettenhöfer	Owen Rice
Henry Stöhr	James Burnside
Michael Rank	Timothy Horsefield
Frederick Hayer	James Greening
Adam Kühner	Conrad Weiser.

of the celebrated specialist in Indian languages and interpreter to the Government, Conrad Weiser.

The first Secretary and Treasurer was Jasper Payne, the steward at Bethlehem. The entries in the Day Book begin on August 13, 1745, when several receipts "for the Furtherance of the Gospel" are recorded without reference to the existence of a society, and immediately on the 19th the name Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel appears in the entries. Therefore, though the complete organization was not yet settled, the Society was regarded as having an existence from that date, and according to the Bethlehem diary its accounts were regularly opened on August 25, 1745 by Jasper Payne, Treasurer. The first receipt entered is:

TUESDAY 13 August 1745

Rec ^d of Abra. Miller for the Furtherance of y ^e Gospel	8/9
Do Jacob Fetter Do	7/6

The first entry under disbursements is:

"Gave a Blanket to Cornelius the Indian, He having lost His in His journey from Chacomaco ¹³/₉."

It is interesting to note the variety of articles contributed in addition to cash. The following is a representative list:

"Five German Ducats @ 14-0.....	£3 . 10 . 0
Four Bear Skins.....	9 . 0
29¼ bushels wheat @ 2-4.....	3 . 8 . 3
Silver Buckels.....	4 . 7½

1 gold ring and pr of silver sleeve buttons, 1 piece silver, lace washed, 4 piece broken silver, a broken tea spoon, 3 pewter dishes, pair of silver studs, 30 bushels Indian corn, a vise for the shop at Shecomeco from Justice Smouth, a silk bag for the collections, 50 pounds of tobacco, flour, "schnitz" [*i.e.*, dried apples] peas, deer skins, a beaver, four gold rings," etc.

No receipts are so significant as these :

Martin Mack who returned of the cash he received	
the 28 Aug.....	£1 . 3 . 6.
Cash returned by Hagen from Shecomeco.....	0 . 6 . 0.
Remainder of the money which the Brn in N. Y.	
gave Br Wade for his journey home.....	4 . 2.
Expenses returned by Leonhard Schnell.....	4 . 7.

There receipts tell of the self-denying economy and conscientious faithfulness of those Gospel messengers in the matter of personal expenses.

After the August Synod Bishop Spangenberg drew up a set of rules almost identical with those of the Society in London, with his favorite passage of Scripture, iii John 5-8 as the motto. His original rough draft of these rules is yet in existence.

Another Synod was held in Lancaster, November 27-28, o.s. 1745 attended by more than two hundred persons, Moravians, Lutherans, Reformed, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Dunkers and Mennonites. The Journal is entitled :

"A brief account of the Pennsylvania General Synod of divers Preachers, Elders, Wardens and Helpers of the various Protestant Religious and other Sects, held in the City Hall at Lancaster in Lancaster County, November 27-28, 1745, St. Vet."

It contains this interesting statement : "For want of another place large enough to meet in, Justice Smouth, an Englishman, granted them the use of the Court House and provided for their maintenance regardless of the craft and rage of many persons who were opposed to the Synod."

The extent to which such craft and rage had been excited by the influence of unscrupulous agitators upon the ignorant and credulous populace appeared clearly when during that Synod a rabble gathered and pelted Bishop

Spangenberg with clods and stones when he arose to preach.

In the minutes of the last session of the Synod stands this entry: "The fundamental plan of a new Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, together with a statement of its object and its regulations was communicated to the Synod, and its members had their first meeting, and elected a Committee, a Secretary and an attendant of the Society."

The formal enactments of this Synod, collected in another manuscript, have the title:

"Synodi Generalis Pennsylvaniae in Praetorio Lancasteriensi habitae Conclusa."

Paragraph 32 of these Conclusa reads thus:

"Inasmuch as some thirty persons have made application to join since they heard in the August Synod of yet another Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, the following articles of constitution were fully approved of by the Synod as well as by them."

Then follow the thirteen articles almost similar to those of the English Society. Being the earliest Constitution of a Missionary Society in America of which any record has been produced, these articles are herewith given in full exactly as they stand in the English copy in the handwriting of John Brownfield, secretary.

1st *The Society is founded* on the Exhortation of St. John in his 3^d Epistle, & on our present Circumstances.

2^d Everything therein shall be *freely transacted* & we do not desire that any Person sho^d bind himself to give a certain Sum; but that each may do according to his Ability and Pleasure.

3^d Yet shall all be transacted in good Order, that *Accounts* may be *rendered* both to God & Man whenever it shall be required.

4th In this respect we will be careful in the *admitting of new Members*, & whoever thro' his Example may give Offence to

Others, such will we entreat not to become Members of the Society.

5th We will appoint a *Committee* of four [six later] Persons, skilful and prudent Men who shall Weekly consider of what the Circumstances of the Society may require and dispose of the Contributions of such kind Friends as shall willingly give, according to the Mind of the Society.

6th A *Secretary* shall also be appointed to keep a Journal of their Proceedings & also their Accounts to keep in good Order; w^{ch} may be laid before the Society, as often as they meet together.

7th The Society shall also have a *regular Servant* to make known what shall be necessary for the Messengers of the Gospel, both on their going out & coming in & to take Care that the same may be provided.

8th Since a great deal depends on the keeping a *regular Correspondence* & that the Expense thereof might be too heavy for one Person to bear, *the Charges* may be defrayed out of the Monies belonging to the Society.

9th When either of the Members of the *Committee*, or the *Secretary* or *Servant* shall go away, the remaining members may propose a Person to supply his Place & in case the Society have nothing to object, when the same shall be proposed in their Meeting such *new Member* may be continued.

10th *The Meeting of the Society* may be as often as the Synod is held & then Matters may be concluded on, provided that one half of the Members at least be present.

11th If any Person will *contribute* thereunto *without becoming a Member* of the Society, he may deliver or send his Contribution either to one of the Members of the Committee, to the Secretary or the Servant, who are directly to deliver the same to the Cashier.

12th The Committee have *Power to propose* to the Society whatever may be for the Service thereof, & when such Proposals are agreed to by the majority of the Societies Votes, they shall be Valid.

13th Should *anything* in the foregoing Regulations be necessary to be *altered* it may not be done by any one Person, but by the *majority of the Votes* of the Society.

The Journal and the Conclusa of that Synod are attested by the signatures of the following men :

Henry Antes, Bethlehem.
 L. T. Nyberg, Lancaster.
 Abraham Reinke, Nazareth.
 David Bruce, Warwick.
 Frederick Boeckel, Heidelberg.
 James Greening, Philadelphia.
 Richard Utley, Neshaminy.
 J. C. Frank, Fredericktown.
 Francis Seib, Donegal.
 Eberhard Rhiem, Muddy Creek.
 Andrew Ostrum, Walpack.
 Michael Rank, Erlington,
 Jost Vollert, Coventry.
 Michael Schaefer, Tulpehocken.
 Michael Brecht, Mühlbach.

The first Executive Committee of Six elected by the Society under the constitution consisted of Henry Antes, *Chairman*, Jasper Payne, *Secretary* and *Treasurer*, Leonhard Schnell, *Servant*, John Brownfield, *Second Secretary*, James Burnside and Samuel Powell.

They had their first regular meeting on Monday December $\frac{5}{16}$, 1745 at which they adopted the following resolutions :

- " 1. To meet every Monday at 2 o'clock afternoon.
2. That at least there shall be four members (including the Secretary and Servant) to make out things.
3. Any one of this Committee that gives out cash &c for the use of the Society shall bring in the acc^t to them at their next meeting to see if they approve of it & if they do not, then they shall pay it out of their own pockets.
4. Not only the Heathen Messengers [missionaries to the heathen] are to have cash &c out of this Society, but also others that go about to preach, visit &c which is

immediately for the furtherance of the Gospel, provided they cannot help themselves by any means otherwise."

Conrad Weiser who had been enrolled as a member objected to the fourth of these resolutions in the following letter :

HEIDELBERG. February 15, 1745-6.

Dear Br. Brownfield,

It is a long time since I received yours of Dec^{br} with the enclosed account of the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel.

I am obliged to you for the trouble therein taken in sending me a copy. I have been very little at home since the receipt thereof. You will therefore be pleased to excuse my delay in writing you an answer which I will do by this opportunity.

I desire you will let the Committee for the Furtherance of the Gospel know that according to the 11 article in the plan of the Society I will contribute thereunto (I mean towards the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Indians of North America) and deliver or send my Contribution accordingly.

By your letter I understand that the Society is likewise to be employed for the service of the white people in general, for which service I have nothing to contribute nor to say to, for it may be properly said of them what Paul says, Romans 10:18. The methods made use of in preaching the Gospel in our days to the white people has only divided them into more parties and sects without any new reformation in my judgment. Every party have given sufficient proof *dass sie das ihre sucht und nicht das allein was Jesu Christi ist*. However as to the poor Indians again it may be properly said of them what Paul says in the recited chapter, v. 14-17 and therefore I assure you that nothing shall be wanting what lies in my power to promote the good design of the Society among the poor Heathen.

May the great God be pleased to send such labourers amongst them by whom their souls may be brought to Jesus Christ, to whom be Worship and Glory forevermore.

I salute you very heartily and desire to become and remain your well known

true friend and brother,

CONRAD WEISER.

A few years later he withdrew his support on account of disagreements in other matters, but eventually cordial relations between him and the Moravian Church authorities were resumed in spite of the efforts of some to use him and his influence against them.

At a Synod held at Bethlehem January 26, o. s. 1746, ten members were added to the central committee, constituting a committee of sixteen with the smaller committee as an Executive Board to transact current business from day to day. This larger committee inspected and audited accounts, received new members and made necessary new regulations at each Synod.

A committee of eight women was also chosen at that time "as helpers" to the general committee.

The vote on these new regulations was taken in this wise: "Two parcels of small paper being laid upon the table it was agreed by the Society that they might be used in the members giving their votes. On one parcel was marked a star to signify *Yes*. The other parcel were all blanks to signify *No*."

The method of voting on the admission of new members was to drop a white bean into the box for an affirmative vote and a black bean for a negative vote.

The ten men elected to make up the committee of sixteen were John Bechtel, Owen Rice, "Joseph" Spangenberg, Thomas Noble, James Greening, William Frey, Adolph Meyer, Edward Evans, John Okely and Nathanael Seidel.

The women elected as Helpers were the Sisters Spangenberg, Greening, Payne, Okely, Becker, Antes, Catherine Huber and Nanny Burnet.

At that meeting Edward Evans and Thomas Noble were appointed agents of the Society in Philadelphia and New York respectively.

At the meeting of the small committee on February 3,

1746, it was decided to open correspondence with the sister society in London and request copies of the monthly missionary reports to be read in the general meetings.

These reports were ordered sent in care of Br. Noble in New York and Br. Benezet in Philadelphia.

On February 17 it was further decided to open correspondence with the other English Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel which had been organized in Yorkshire, and with that in Holland.

The Society also had a seal. The minutes of the Committee of Six, March 10, o. s. 1746, have this:

“A seal that Abraham Boemper had engraved on silver and presented by the hands of Brother Joseph to the Society, was now delivered into the care of Jasper Payne. It expresses Abraham receiving the three angels.”

The letter book of the Society contains the letter written by Boemper February 22, 1746, from New York, in reference to this seal. He begs the Society to accept it as a present and sets forth the honor he feels in being permitted to employ his handicraft for such an object. He was a silversmith by trade, a son of John Jacob Boemper of New York, the first friend of Spangenberg and first agent of Moravian missions in that city, and was later a resident of Bethlehem. At a general meeting of the Society held in Philadelphia March 27, o. s., 1746 Abraham Boemper was appointed its New York agent in the place of Thomas Noble deceased.

This first seal was possibly only an experiment, incomplete in design. The minutes of another meeting of the Committee of Six, held May 27, o. s. 1746, contain this record:

“An impression of the Society’s seal in London was shew’d, it being made a present of to Bro^r Joseph. Agreed that Bro^r Powell cast a seal after the same model in brass.”

Samuel Powell, brasier and bell-founder, from Whitechurch, Shropshire, England, was, with his wife, among the English members of the "First Sea Congregation" of 1742, lived for a while in Philadelphia, where he was one of the agents of the Brethren at Bethlehem, removed to Bethlehem October 29, 1745, and took charge of the new tavern on the south side of the Lehigh, later called the Crown Inn, filling this position until May 31, 1746. Subsequently he returned to Philadelphia, where he died in 1762. It does not appear whether he attempted to cast such a brass seal or not. He did however cast the bell for the mission chapel at Gnadenhütten on the Mahoning, which the Society decided at its general meeting, January 18, o. s. 1747, to procure—the Indians having offered some skins in part payment—and the minutes of a committee meeting, August 2, o. s. 1747, contain the following entry:

"Bethlehem must have credit for a bell which they paid Samuel Powell for, and is for the use of the Indians in Gnadenhütten, weighing 15 lb—£1 11."

The record of that general meeting of January 18 states that "Br. Joseph gave Br. Boemper's love to the Society and presented a silver seal which Br. Boemper gave to the Society."

It is not clear whether this refers to the seal mentioned at the meeting of the small committee on March 10, or to a second, more elaborate one, engraved after the model of that in London referred to on May 27. That original seal of the English Society had upon it not only the device representing Abraham receiving the three mysterious visitants at the door of his tent in Mamre, as reproduced by Boemper, but above it the words "after this manner also," and beneath, a reference to Hebrews 13: 2—"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." It

also bore the citation 3 John, 5-8, the passage which had been taken as the watchword and was adopted by the Pennsylvania organization.

A not inconsiderable part of the Society's activity consisted in supplying books in all neighborhoods traversed by its missionaries. It sold and donated Bibles, hymn-books, catechisms, various devotional works, special publications of the Moravian Church and even school books, in at least five languages. The first general depository was in charge of Samuel Powell at the Crown Inn. Numerous invoices of books from Europe, especially from the London Society, appear in the accounts. One such item noted in October, 1748, is the receipt of 450 volumes from the printing office of the church at Marienborn. At a meeting in January, 1749, it was proposed that in future instead of sending to England for books, they be printed in Philadelphia.

Many other articles were sent by friends in England for the use of the Society. Several invoices from the Yorkshire Society appear in the accounts, mainly textile fabrics, cutlery and other light wares of steel and brass, for the use of the Indians and the missionaries, or to be sold for the benefit of the Society's treasury. In these lists are mentioned: Yorkshire broadcloth, blue cloth, white, blue and checked linen, camlet, serge, whole and half ticking, white and blue stroud, none-so-pretty, straw-water, velvet, silk and woolen ferreting, tape and binding, hatchets, butcher-knives, spring knives, scissors, needles, pins, knitting-needles, thimbles, candle-snuffers, combs, etc.

The functions of a historical society were also assumed in several particulars by this old Pennsylvania missionary organization. Its Secretary was charged to carefully preserve all interesting letters and important documents, the missionaries were encouraged to furnish historical and

descriptive matter in reference to places visited, care was taken to keep in remembrance historic spots associated with the pioneer activity of the Brethren and the graves of those who died away from their settlements were looked after.

December 12, 1751, the Committee decided to procure a stone for the grave of Valentine Loehans, one of the St. Thomas heroes whom Count Zinzendorf found imprisoned on that island in 1739, and who while evangelizing among the Negroes about New York during a brief stay at Bethlehem, died of fever on Staten Island, January 8, 1743, and was buried there, and Br. Owen Rice, minister in New York, was commissioned to attend to the matter.

The years from 1745 to 1755, which constituted the most active period in the early work of the Moravian Church in America, were also the most flourishing and fruitful years of the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel. An idea of the extent of the work which enlisted the enthusiastic efforts of this organization may be conveyed by such facts as the following, which are on record. At a Saturday love-feast in Bethlehem, September 4, 1745, the cosmopolitan character of Moravian Home and Foreign Missions then in progress but a little more than a decade, was set forth in a novel way by verses sung in thirteen different languages by persons representing these nationalities, and three individuals were present of three other languages who did not contribute a stanza to the medley. At the next such occasion, on September 11, the statement was made that in three years 87 men and 53 women with 17 children had gone out from Bethlehem to engage in mission work among the heathen and among nominal Christians; that of these 14 men, 7 women and 7 children had died; that 25 men and 15 women had gone to Europe, and that 79

men and women who had gone out from Bethlehem were thus engaged in the work at various places.

Elsewhere it is stated that in 1745 the journeys from and to Bethlehem in the work of the Gospel numbered 450, that the regular preaching places in Pennsylvania and the adjacent colonies had increased to 20; that a beginning was made in compiling a collection of Mohican hymns; that the first religious awakening and baptism among the Delawares had taken place, and that regular Sunday afternoon preaching in the Indian language was commenced by the missionary John Hagen for the benefit of the Indian converts driven out of New York and temporarily sojourning on the bank of the Lehigh at Bethlehem in the group of cabins called Friedenshütten. These were the Indians the most of whom in June, 1746, went up the river to the mouth of the Mahoning creek and founded Gnadenhütten, to which station the Society devoted much of its effort during the next few years.

In 1747 the work at Shamokin begins to figure as an object of attention, numerous supplies donated or purchased by the Society being sent to that place, while on the other hand quantities of valuable furs, pelts and other articles sent down from there by the Indians and utilized by the industries at Bethlehem, swell the receipts of the Society in the shape of credits on the books of the "Oeconomie," or co-operative union, at this time in its highest prosperity. Balthaser Orth was on January 17, 1748, appointed agent of the Society to transport articles to Shamokin and George Loesch to forward return commodities to Bethlehem. At the same time Henry Van Vleck, successor to Thomas Noble, merchant of New York, was appointed its agent in that city in place of Abraham Boemper, who had removed to Bethlehem. At a meeting on January 24, 1748, the names of 108 members were read. The chief object was not to

merely increase its numbers, but to make it as efficient an agency as possible in the prosecution of missionary work and at the same time to furnish by means of it a return of spiritual good to those who belonged to it. The purpose of the Society and the significance of membership in it were not rightly understood by some in different places who belonged to it, and these things had to be repeatedly explained, especially when dissatisfaction became manifest and complaints about the demands made upon them were indulged in by some members. A general meeting of the Society was held June 15, 1748, during the sessions of a Synod at Bethlehem, at which these matters were very frankly set forth. The minutes of that meeting contain the following for the benefit of those who were dissatisfied or misunderstood their status: "*Declared*, That the door of entrance to the Society was somewhat narrow, but that out of it very wide, because no member was bound either by promise or writing to continue therein a quarter of an hour.

"*Declared*, That a person being accepted as a member of this Society must by no means be understood anything like the being received into the congregation—it being quite another thing and to be only looked on as a privilege of assisting the Saviour's work according as each should be willing, whether outwardly with their substance or else with their prayers."

The membership continued however to grow and its resources to increase. A list of April 5, 1749, contains the names of 129 persons, 96 men and 33 women—more than four times the original number. This list represents, as nearly as can be ascertained, about thirty localities at which the Brethren had stations or itinerant appointments at that time, and about one-third of the names are those of persons not strictly connected with the Moravian Church.

This co-operation in the furtherance of the Gospel was the most tangible fruit of the union efforts represented by the Pennsylvania Synod. Besides Conrad Weiser, a number of prominent and influential men in various parts of Pennsylvania and New Jersey belonging to the Anglican, Lutheran and Calvinistic communions were regular members of the Society or stated contributors. Some such were the Justices Edward Smouth of Lancaster, Deryck Schuyler of New Brunswick and Daniel Brodhead of Dansbury.

At this time Bishop John de Watteville was in Pennsylvania, having been deputed to carry into effect some important changes in the organization of the Church, its external policy and methods of operation. The Evangelical Alliance, called the Pennsylvania Synod, having become a mere name, was abandoned, some congregations gathered on the former basis but consisting of people who preferred connection with the Brethren were organized into regular Moravian Churches, and a new epoch of more distinct denominational activity made necessary by the attitude of other bodies and feasible by the enactments of the British Government was introduced. A Synod held at Bethlehem October 12-16, 1748, at which de Watteville presided, was the first of these gatherings which formally assumed the character of a Synod of the Moravian Church.

The Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel was continued under the new order of things because its activity was all directed to the support of work carried on by the heads of the Moravian Church who organized it and were the leading spirits in the Pennsylvania Synod from the first. October 15, 1749, Bishop Spangenberg, having been displaced by Bishop John Nitschmann and Bishop Cammerhoff, who since 1746 had been in Pennsylvania as Spangenberg's assistant, left for Europe with

de Watteville. This strange move was a serious detriment to the cause and in 1751 he returned and once more assumed control of the American work, for it was clear that no other man then available was capable to take his place.

At the first meeting of the Society's Committee of Six after his return, held December ⁹/₂₀, 1751, it was decided to propose a change of the name of the Society to "Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen." This proposition was adopted by the Committee of Sixteen on December ¹²/₂₃ following, and after that the Society was commonly spoken of as the "Heathen Society." This change was in the line of previous drift, restricting its work to the missions among the heathen in North America, the West Indies, Surinam and Berbice (Dutch and French Guiana) these all being directed by the Board at Bethlehem and principally sustained by the members of the American Church. The Society was no longer expected to maintain the itinerant or located activity among the white people of the colonies.

The general measures instituted in 1748 which got the work of the Brethren in America better in hand and gave it more definite character, confining it more than previously to fixed points where permanent establishment and some return in pecuniary support might be hoped for, brought about a kind of concentration of management and control also in the Society. April 18, 1752, the Treasurer at Bethlehem as such became Treasurer of the Society. This came with the increasing propensity to depend on Bethlehem to help out of every tight place, a propensity which later grew into a chronic disease not only of this Society but also of city and country congregations, especially the latter among which liberal giving was the most difficult to develop of all the virtues. In

July of that year the need of having the country members stirred up in this matter was set forth and John Bechtel was appointed to travel about and do this.

At a general meeting in Lancaster March 10, 1753 Bishop Spangenberg suggested the advisability of securing for the Society incorporation in law, but actual steps in this direction do not seem to have been taken.

The suggestion may have had some connection with promised or expected legacies like that later realized from the estate of Justice Edward Smouth, and with an occasional receipt sufficiently considerable to be invested as capital, like the £300 derived by the Society in January 1748 from the sale of the ship *Catherine*⁶ which had been purchased by Spangenberg in London in 1742 and had carried the "First Sea Congregation" across the ocean.

The minutes of a meeting held February 24, 1754, during a Synod at Donegal, indicate that a kind of review or summing up of the previous work of the Society was given. It is recorded that 353 Indians had been baptized up to that time, and Br. Nathanael Seidel related "that from the beginning of the Society more than £1900 were spent, and if the Heathens should be counted who have been baptized by the Brethren [*i.e.*, in North and South America and the West Indies, the fields worked by the Brn. in Pa.] then the number will exceed the 1900; that we therefore have more than one

⁶ The vessel was sold by Samuel Powell agent, under power of attorney given to Peter Boehler July 13, 1742, by George Stonehouse of Buttermeer, in the County of Wilts, England, in whose name she had been registered.

A clause of the instrument set apart £200 for the use of the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel when such Society should be formed in Pennsylvania, the money to be devoted towards buying another vessel to be employed in the service of the Gospel.

For details see Transactions, Moravian Historical Society, Vol. V. pp. 54-58.

heathen for each pound." Pa. currency is meant. In this quaint statement Br. Nathanael seems to anticipate modern business ways of looking at missionary work, and from even this standpoint makes a showing hard to parallel.

After this time the Society began to decline and never quite regained the vigor of the years that have just been reviewed. Several causes combined to bring this about. One was the loss by death of some of its most zealous and faithful early leaders and supporters, John Brownfield in 1752, James Burnside, Daniel Brodhead and particularly Henry Antes in 1755, and many of its most devoted members in the country districts. Men of like spirit did not come in to recruit the ranks.

Another cause was the gradual withdrawal of interest and support among people outside the membership of the Moravian Church, this being partly the fruit of the persistent detraction to which the work of the Brethren had been subjected by their enemies, partly the effect of the impression which got abroad in the early 50's, that the Church was ruined and bankrupt in consequence of the financial crisis which came upon it in Europe at that time, partly on the other hand the prevalence of the notion among the country people that Bethlehem was in possession of inexhaustible wealth because the Brethren owned much land, and were supposed to need no help. A third cause was that with the development of organized general management after the work of the Church at large had grown beyond the possibility of being handled and maintained in the primitive manner, the centralization of control in official Church boards weakened the free, spontaneous disposition of people scattered far and wide to make common cause in the support of the missions. Yet another cause was the widespread failure of crops producing general

scarcity in Pennsylvania from 1753 to 1755, the support withdrawn under this stress not being recovered later.

Following those years of scarcity came the long-feared outbreak of hostilities on the part of the Indians in league with the French, after the severe blow suffered by the British in the defeat of Braddock at Fort Duquesne in July 1755, introducing a reign of terror in Pennsylvania. In the effects of this lay the final cause. It is not hard to understand that under those conditions very few people about the country felt disposed to labor and sacrifice for the benefit of missions among the Indians when the contagion of fierce resentment against the race was spreading on account of the unspeakable atrocities perpetrated by the savages on every side, when the ignorant and malicious were propagating the groundless charge that the Brethren at Bethlehem were also in league with the French and were even supplying arms and ammunition to the hostile Indians, and men thought it dangerous to be even considered a friend of the Moravians.

Awfully enough did the massacre of ten⁷ of their number by the savages at Gnadenhütten on the Mahoning November 24, 1755, vindicate the Brethren against this absurd slander, but the blow given thereby to the work of evangelizing the Indians dampened the zeal of all but the most devoted and undaunted even among the Moravians themselves.

August 16, 1755, during the synod at Warwick already mentioned, the Society's Committee of Six was abolished and the management of the business was left to the larger Committee of Sixteen or a majority of the same which now constituted the active nucleus of the

⁷ It has been customary to speak of eleven persons as having perished at Gnadenhütten. The whole number of white persons together there was sixteen. Ten perished on the spot, one was taken captive and died next year, and five escaped.

membership, the central Executive Board of the Church at Bethlehem having under the altered arrangements practically taken the place of the inner Executive Committee of the Society. The arrangement to have the Treasurer at Bethlehem serve as Treasurer of the Society, after being tried for a while, was declared an inconvenient plan, and George Klein, the man who had turned over his farm at Warwick for the new settlement of Lititz, was elected Treasurer of the Society. A legacy of £50 left the Society by Henry Antes and a collection of £31. 12 taken at the Warwick Synod were devoted towards paying off a debt due the Society's New York agent, Henry Van Vleck, Bishop Spangenberg personally assuming the remainder of this obligation. An agreement was also made at this time that the establishment at Bethlehem release the Society of all demands on condition that it relinquish its right to the smithshop and tools at Shamokin. Prior to this time regular communion collections had been introduced in the city and country congregations in aid of the general work other than that among the heathen, John Bechtel being Treasurer of these collections. It was explained and enforced on this occasion that this was an arrangement quite distinct from the work of the Society, and that the two were not to be confused by the people.

A further stage of decline in the work of the Society is indicated by a resolution adopted at a committee meeting on July 6, 1756, at Bethlehem, to the effect that the ordinary business of the Society might be transacted by any number of members occasionally present, but that more essential and weighty matters could only be decided by a majority. At that meeting £15 sent by Anthony Benezet of Philadelphia for the relief of the poor Indian congregation of Gnadenhütten now quartered at Bethlehem and 500 Rix Dollars from Germany for these

same "luckless brown Brethren" are referred to, the Society being empowered to disburse the money.

At a general meeting at Bethlehem September 27, 1756, there being 66 members, 45 men and 21 women, present, an evidence of some revival of interest in the organization appeared in the proposal of 16 persons as new members.

On the other hand a further merging of its management and resources in those of the general board at Bethlehem is indicated by the throwing together of the communion collections mentioned before and the Society's semi-annual collections, the Treasurers, Bechtel and Klein, to cooperate. The reason assigned is that the people in the town and country congregations were continually confusing the two collections and their treasurers. Thus the revenues for missions to the heathen and those for the support of needy work among the white population were again received and disbursed in one account as at the beginning.

Reference was made on this occasion to the accumulation of burdensome debts and it was announced that "after the Society had done what they could and nevertheless fell short, then Bethlehem, as frequently has been the case, would make good the deficiency."

The unflinching loyalty to the missionary work and the energy and superb management which made possible what was done, under the prevailing dreadful conditions, by the cooperative association at Bethlehem and the "upper places" on the Barony of Nazareth can hardly be appreciated now. The stress of the time is suggested by such a statement in the records as the following on August 22, 1856, viz, that about 640 refugees had fled to the Brethren during the previous winter, half naked and half starved, and that apart from what this cost them, 5000 bushels of grain had to be bought (over and above what they raised) to get through the winter.

At that general meeting of September 27 the Society was especially exhorted to remember those who were on journeys by sea, because their vessel in those troublous times might readily fall into the hands of privateers. The church ship, the *Irene*, was at the time on her westward voyage from London. On November 30 of that same year she was really captured by a privateer on her return voyage eastward, although this did not become known at Bethlehem until May 18, 1758.

The news of this great loss had not arrived therefore when at a meeting of the Committee of Sixteen on January 17, 1758, Bishop Peter Boehler who had just arrived from Europe a month before for his fifth and final term of service in America, expressed the wish that the Church might have another vessel besides the *Irene* to ply between New York and the West Indies, Surinam, the coast of North Carolina, etc., and transport missionaries and supplies, stating that it was Zinzendorf's idea that the Brethren should labor everywhere to gather first-fruits from among the heathen and then by means of them bring the gospel to the Indians even as far as California. This was earnestly considered, but nothing was ever done in the matter. It is interesting to note however that the Society as such yet had sufficient vigor, that it was capable of entertaining large plans, and that the thought of an Indian mission in California first undertaken by the Moravian Church more than a century and a quarter later was then spoken of by the "Heathen Society" at Bethlehem.

May 12, 1757, the next meeting of the Committee of Sixteen was held at Nazareth, eleven being present. A special appeal to members of the Society to make an effort to liquidate its debt was ordered, and it was decided to have regular meetings four times a year. This is the last meeting of which there is a record in the original

minute and day book. The subsequent minutes have disappeared, and there is so little to be said about the Society after this time that it is not surprising that historians of Bethlehem and of the work of the Moravian Church in America have assumed that its existence terminated with the dissolution of the General Cooperative Union of Bethlehem and the Nazareth stations in 1762.

Though this Society disappeared from general view as an organized agency, its nominal existence continued practically another decade, and measures to organize the new one on a more enduring basis were under discussion before the old one was completely defunct.

Bishop Spangenberg left finally for Europe in 1762. Bishop Boehler followed him in 1764. Bishop Nathanael Seidel became General Superintendent of the work in America in 1762, and another strong man, John Ettwein, came to the front at his side, while the peerless David Zeisberger was in the prime of his activity with the devoted missionaries Post, Grube, Schmick and others, and young John Heckewelder was starting out on his distinguished career. The decline of this Society therefore did not mean decay of missionary interest, but the adoption of other ways and means to carry on the work.

Before the death of Count Zinzendorf in 1760, the leaders of the Church in Europe had instituted a separate mission treasury and account, and half yearly mission collections, at Epiphany and at the Feast of St. John the Baptist, were established in the congregations. The first such stated "Heathen collection" was taken in Bethlehem in 1763.

In 1764 the General Synod of the Church entrusted the management of this whole matter to a special Board of Commissioners or "Deputies," incorporated in 1789 into the General Directorate (the Unity's Elders' Conference) as its Mission Department. These Commis-

sioners or Deputies of Foreign Missions subsequently appointed agents in England and America to foster interest and take charge of the collections. Nathanael Seidel and John Arbo, Warden of the Single Brethren's House at Bethlehem, were in 1766 appointed the American agents. In the country congregations and in some of those in the towns, where the old Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel was fixed in the minds of the people and the stated communion collections, although but paltry in amount as a rule, were an established institution, and the people did not take readily to new regulations, it was thought wise to let the prevailing arrangements run on, and the new efforts were pressed mainly in the regular settlements at Bethlehem, Nazareth and Lititz and in the New York and Philadelphia congregations. The receipts of the old Society after 1762 consist therefore almost exclusively of such communion collections, while the most conspicuous feature of its accounts is its chronic indebtedness to the Bethlehem treasury. In 1764 its total receipts are recorded as having amounted to £450. At each Synod its accounts were audited by the deputies of the town and country congregations which joined in the communion collections.

The Society had become merely an association of stated contributors, outside of the Church settlements, but with very few exceptions members of the Church, who in return received the missionary reports which circulated regularly.

Other kinds of activity on the part of the organization as such ceased when the direction of the work in the West Indies and South America passed out of the hands of the authorities at Bethlehem into those of the general commissioners in Europe after the General Synod of 1764.

At stated intervals circulars were issued to the con-

gregations by the governing board of the American church called the *Oeconomat's Confercnz*, and after 1771 known as the Provincial Helper's Conference, calling for the collections of the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel. The last such circular letter which exists among the papers in the archives of the Church is signed in the name of this board by Bishop Matthew Hehl and is dated June 8, 1771. For some years prior to this the little Society had been hopelessly in debt to the Bethlehem treasury, and its collections thus called for from time to time were but gradual payments on this standing deficit. At the end of May 1767, according to the circular of June 28, this amounted to £402, 7. ¼. the collections of the Society since the end of May 1766 having been £203, 12. 6.

Meanwhile the formation of a new Society on the basis of the resuscitated English one was under consideration. Six documents from Europe bearing on this subject exist among the surviving papers.

1. A copy of a letter of Bishop Frederick Wenzel Neisser, one of the Commissioners or Deputies of Foreign Missions, to Bishop John Nitschmann at Zeist in Holland, dated November 30, 1764, stating that at a meeting of the Committee of the Synod to consider the subject of the missions among the heathen it had been determined to revive the Missionary Society in Holland but in reference to a like step in England to first consult the English ministers.

2. A letter of the Board of Commissioners to the Executive Board at Bethlehem, dated Herrnhut, February 8, 1766, referring to the decision of 1764 that in future all of the missions except those among the North American Indians should be managed directly by the Commissioners in Europe, intimating that the American Brethren had taken this too strictly in ceasing entirely to

give support to the West India work and urging them to nevertheless continue to do what they could in the way of such support.

3. A copy in English and one in German of the constitution of the revived English Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen, dated London, March 10, 1766.

4. A letter of Bishop Peter Boehler to the Executive Board at Bethlehem, dated at Zeist in Holland, March 21, 1766, referring to the reorganization of the Societies in Holland and England on the same basis, to the more general establishment of the half yearly collections, to the decision of the commissioners to include also the Indian missions in North America under their general administrative and financial care, to the appointment of Seidel and Arbo as Mission Agents in America, and to the plan of placing the "Pennsylvania Heathen Society on the same footing as that in England."

5. A letter of the Commissioners to the board at Bethlehem, April 15, 1766, urging immediate steps in the matter of a new Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, and requesting the establishment of the half-yearly collections already referred to.

6. A letter of instruction to Seidel and Arbo, as the newly appointed Mission Agents, dated April 16, 1766.

All of these documents seem to have been received at once at Bethlehem on September 12, 1766. The first formal consideration of the subject of organizing a new Society like that in England, as proposed, took place on October 15, 1766. The minutes of the Oeconomat's Conferenz on that date record the following opinions and conclusions :

The difficulties in the way of carrying out the suggestions, taken strictly and literally, were considered to be so great that the step was not deemed feasible. If Phila-

delphia was to be the place there were not enough suitable men there to fill the large and small committees called for by the proposed rules. If the Society was to be a local one anywhere, it was not practicable because the "friends of the kingdom of Jesus not in connection with the Church" who were supposed to join were wanting. In New York one was thought of and in Philadelphia one, viz, Benezet. Meetings every four weeks would also not be practicable. It was well known that about the country here nothing could be done in the way of securing subscriptions such as the proposed rules called for. Even the members of the congregations in the country could not be induced to subscribe to the collection for the general needs of the Church (Unitäts-Beitrag) and it was likely that this annual collection would suffer from the competitive claims of such a Society.

An attempt might be made in New York and again in Philadelphia and then in Lancaster to organize local missionary societies, but there were few suitable people to take the lead in the matter.

The introduction of the half-yearly collections in the City and Country Congregations could be undertaken by the new agents, but in such case "the hitherto existing Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel would *eo ipso* come to an end."

It was finally concluded to turn over to the Commissioners "two thirds of the collections taken at Bethlehem and of the income of the existing Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel until the next Synod, the rest being required for the expenses of itinerant work and official visits here in the country."

That this arrangement was carried out appears from the following entry in the Journal of the General Treasury at Bethlehem :

"The Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel debtor

to the Agents of the Heathen Diaconate for $\frac{2}{3}$ of £68. 1. 5½. for collections received from the congregations in the country since June 1, 1770—£45. 7. 7½."

The whole system from 1762 to 1771 was transitional and unsatisfactory. In 1771 a complete administrative and financial reorganization took place on the basis of legislation enacted by the General Synod of 1769.

The existence of the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel disappeared in an unhonored burial given it in the great Ledger of the General Diaconate of 1762-1771, when the new system was introduced.

The old books were closed on May 31, and a new set opened June 1, 1771. In the aforesaid great Ledger which was opened June 1, 1762, when the Cooperative Association was dissolved and the General Diaconate at Bethlehem commenced business, we find among the accounts closed on May 31, 1771, and not transferred to the new books of the new Unity's Administration or consigned to the Bethlehem Congregation as so many bad debts had been, sundry dubious accounts designated as forgiven or denied. Among these was one due the General Diaconate at Bethlehem from the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel to the amount of £459. 13. which, said the accountant in a memorandum, "must be considered sunk, as the said Society is dissolved and the Income as well as the Expenses are now managed by the Sustentation in Bethlehem." This charging off of a debt of £459. 13. ends the history of the Society and is in pathetic contrast to the records of its early heroic work. Meanwhile the dark days of the Revolution came on when the Moravian Church in America barely continued to exist. Eventually came peace, revival and reconstruction, and the move urged in 1766 and again in 1768 was recalled. A paper in the handwriting of Bishop John Ettwein has the following: "When in the

year 1768 the United Brethren in England renewed and formed their Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, the Brethren in Bethlehem were called upon by the Directors of the Mission Department in the Elders' Conference of the Unity to gather and regulate such a Society in Bethlehem, which could not be done directly, but some members of the Helpers' Conference kept it in remembrance and when in the year 1786 they saw a clear way to follow the advice of our European Brethren, they sent them their proposal and a rough draft as a plan for a Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen, which was kindly received, amended, approved and recommended for execution, which was cheerfully done, [the venerable Bishop Spangenberg being yet living and President of the general governing Board in Europe] and the Stated Rules of the Society of the United Brethren for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen agreed on and subscribed in Bethlehem the 21 of September, 1787, as printed."